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Published every Saturday — online all the time — by Brooklyn Paper Publications Inc., 55 Washington St., Suite 624, Brooklyn NY 11201. Phone 718-334-9350 • www.BrooklynPapers.com • © 2006 Brooklyn Paper Publications • 16 pages • Vol. 29, No. 33 AWP • Saturday, August 26, 2006 • FREE

ATLANTIC YARDS HEARING PITS PRO VS. CON IN HISTORIC BATTLE FOR BROOKLYN 2,000 show up, only 100 get a chance to speak



Opponents of Bruce Ratner's Atlantic Yards mega-project made their point clear at Wednesday night's seven-hour hearing on the development

**By Gersh Kuntzman
and Ariella Cohen**
The Brooklyn Papers

Supporters and opponents of Bruce Ratner's Atlantic Yards mega-development clashed loudly and repeatedly during Wednesday's state hearing on the project — and in doing so put forward two distinct visions of Brooklyn's future.

Seats were in short supply — and so was civility — at a NYC Technical College auditorium, as opponents of the project were roundly jeered by supporters, who, in turn, were booed by opponents.

Because the hearing's moderator chose to alternate pro-Atlantic Yards speakers and anti-Yards speakers, the visceral clash between the two sides was abundantly on display.

For every unemployed speaker begging the state to approve the project — whose backers predict will create "jobs in the community" — there was a seemingly more affluent activist kicking off the traffic, transit, open space, noise and pollution shortcomings of the project.

For every Rev. Herbert Daughtry, who got \$50,000 from Ratner after he came out in support of the project, there was a Lee Solomon, a resident of Fort Greene, whose opposition to the project has not earned her a dime.

For every union ironworker making brownie points with his union to testify, there was a community activist hoping to testify quickly so she could save on babysitting.

The see-saw night started before the first speaker even approached the podium in the Kilgore Auditorium on Jay Street. Downtown, with a request from the moderator for civility — which was almost immediately ignored as Borough President Markowitz, who is the public official most identified by his outspoken support of the project, made the first speech.



Bruce Ratner on Wednesday

Markowitz could barely be heard over the boos and cheers.

"Thank you very much," he said. "What you just heard was a Brooklyn cheer. It's OK. I believe Atlantic Yards is the right project, at the right time, at the right place."

His biggest applause line came when he said that Ratner would build his project with "100 percent union labor."

But the cheering abruptly stopped when the Beep changed gears.

"This project needs to be reduced," he said. "The Williamsburgh Savings Bank should remain Brooklyn's tallest building! The height of the 62-story 'Miss Brooklyn' must be reduced. Next, build a school! And next, insure public safety. And get real about traffic and parking. Finally, make the open space accessible and integrated seamlessly into the neighborhood."

After exceeding his allotted three minutes by at least two, he left the podium to a resounding chorus of boos, as project supporters felt betrayed and opponents felt that Markowitz's concerns about the project came "too little, too late," as one man yelled out.

As the second speaker of the night — state Sen. Marty Golden (R-Bay Ridge) — approached the podium, former Community Board 8 member Connie Lesold could not hold her tongue.

"It's not right that he should speak," she said as she was escorted out. "He's from the far southern end of Brooklyn. His neighborhood hasn't lost firehouses. This project is a gateway to rich corporations!"

A dozen elected officials got to speak at the "public hearing" before the public itself, while hundreds of people waited their turn or, worse, waited outside just to get into the hearing (see story on page 5).

Any politician who supported the project was

See **BATTLE** on page 5



...while supporters, including this woman holding a "Yes in my back yard" sign, cheered the development as a source of jobs and affordable housing.

MORE COVERAGE OF THE ATLANTIC YARDS HEARING IS INSIDE, ON PAGE 5

Towns: Bush needs to apologize to the UN for war in Iraq

By Gersh Kuntzman
The Brooklyn Papers

President Bush needs to beg the nations of the world for forgiveness if the United States is going to get out of the "mess" in Iraq. That's what Rep. Ed Towns (D-Fort Greene) told The Brooklyn Papers this week, in an exclusive interview.

"The president needs to go back to the United Nations and apologize for his behavior," Towns said. "He was actually pretty arrogant when he

went to the U.N. and indicated we'd go it alone if we had to."

Only an abject apology, Towns said, would get the United Nations to now send peacekeepers to Iraq — allowing for a complete U.S. pullout.

"Number one, we'll get [back] the \$2 billion per week that we're spending [in Iraq], which could go into education and health care and all these other things that we need to have money for," said Towns, who voted against the use of force before the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq.

A Bush apology, Towns added, would "get the United Nations and these other nations to pay, like we did in Afghanistan."

"He needs to go back and say, 'Look, we want your involvement. We understand that this is a mess, I made a mistake, but we want your help.'"

A reporter reminded Towns that the president has actually been moving further away from such an apology.

In fact, as Towns was speaking to The Brooklyn Papers, the president was holding a press conference in Washington, sounding very unapologetic about the war.

"There are a lot of people in the Democratic Party who believe that the best course of action is to leave Iraq before the job is done, period," Bush said. "And they're wrong... We're not going to leave Iraq before the job is done, and we'll complete the mission in Iraq. I can't tell you exactly when it's going to be done."

That, Towns said, is exactly the problem.

"Without him going back to the UN, we can't fix the mess that's there now," said Towns, who was seeking The Papers' endorsement in his Sept. 12 primary race against City Councilman Charles Barron (D-Canarsie) and Assemblyman Roger Green (D-Fort Greene).

"We need to reach out and get other countries to

See **APOLOGIZE** on page 13



Clock block

for The Brooklyn Papers

Brooklynites better start investing in their own timepieces, because that new scaffolding atop the Williamsburgh Savings Bank's famous clock (above) won't be going away anytime soon.

Renovations of the historic tower and clock — which began with the embroiling of the four-faced timepiece last week — will take a year, according to Andrew MacArthur, a spokesman for the company that is renovating the former dental epicenter into luxury apartments.

"They are repairing the façade — ensuring that the

See **BLOCK** on page 13

SHILLARY!

Five who changed Hil's tune on a-park-ments

By Dana Rubinstein
The Brooklyn Papers

Who got to Hillary?

That was the question on the minds of Brooklyn insiders — and conspiracy theorists — after the New York junior senator's stunning flip-flop last week from her initial opposition to a state plan to build luxury housing and open space on the Brooklyn waterfront.

As reported in The Brooklyn Papers two weeks ago, Clinton first came out against the "housing-in-the-park" scheme, saying that the plan was "disingenuous" and "yet another luxury housing project."

What followed was "a sense of surprise and confusion among local electeds," said one source, who asked to remain anonymous.

But just one week later, after at least five big-time Brooklyn politicians called her, Clinton did a sudden about-face, saying she supported the park and had come to understand that private luxury housing was "necessary."

Borough President Markowitz's office, state Sen. Martin Bonnor (D-Brooklyn Heights), Assemblywoman Joan Millman (D-Park Slope), City Councilman Bill DeBlasio (D-Park Slope) and Brooklyn Bridge Park Conservancy president Marianna Koval — all staunch supporters of the plan — confirmed they contacted Clinton or her senior staff after the senator's first comment.



Markowitz



Connor



Millman



DeBlasio



Clinton

After the barrage of phone calls, Clinton sent a letter to Brooklyn Bridge Park Development Corporation President Wendy Leverett that suddenly supported the waterfront development — acknowledging that her flip-flop came as a result of "information provided to me."

A coincidence? Local opponents to the plan think not.

"The letter uses the exact phrasing used by Clinton, but of the handliners of this botched plan," said Judi Francis, the president of the Brooklyn Bridge Park Defense Fund, which is suing to block the construction of housing in what is supposed to be a public park.

The controversial project calls for a 1.3-mile waterfront development and recreation area stretching from DUMBO to Brooklyn Heights that is supposed to be self-sustaining thanks to fees levied on the residents of the luxury housing.

Clinton condemned that very aspect of the plan on August 9 at a campaign stop in Sunset Park. She questioned the notion of self-sustainability, and even recommended that reporters read the autobiography of Nobel Peace Prize winner Wangari Maathai, a Kenyan environmentalist who fought luxury housing in Nairobi's Uhuru Park.

After The Brooklyn Papers reported Clinton's comments, local officials went ballistic — diplomatically speaking, of course.

"I called to give her a fuller

See **HILL** on page 13

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Developer on the ropes

Spitzer investigating complaints about Boymelgreen's practices

By Ariella Cohen
The Brooklyn Papers

A developer who plans to transform the banks of Brooklyn's Lavender Lake into a designer subdivision called Gowanus Village is facing a state investigation and legal complaints from construction workers and dozens of disgruntled condo owners.

Attorney General Eliot Spitzer is examining a claim by 200 construction workers that developer Shaya Boymelgreen failed to pay overtime for the past three years — the same charge that is being heard in a separate class-action suit at state Supreme Court, — a source in Spitzer's office said.

Spitzer's lawyers are also arbitrating complaints from Park Slope condo owners who bought Boymelgreen apartments only to discover that the windows didn't keep out the rain, walls weren't properly insulated and bad engineering meant moldy cellars.

"It was a little shocking to see all the problems in the home we bought," said Scott Sucher, president of the Park Slope Estates condo board.

Sucher was surprised mostly because Boymelgreen's name is increasingly attached to high-end real estate.

The developer has been banking on the market power of Brooklyn's stroller revolution since the late 1990s, snapping up gritty residential blocks and remaking them. With Park Slope Estates and two other bucolically named condo developments on Second and Third streets between Fourth and Fifth avenues, he introduced bigger, luxury-styled condos to what was then a fringe of Park Slope.

This year, he expects to finish construction on the 12-story luxury Park Slope Tower on Fourth Avenue at Fifth Street as well as another apartment tower on Second Street and Fourth Avenue, and a condo-hotel at 75 Smith St., at Atlantic Avenue in Boerum Hill.

Over the next decade, he plans to bring the same family-friendly luxury living to a four-acre parcel he owns on the banks of the Gowanus Canal.

And he's a big player in DUMBO, where his 23-story Beacon Tower and a 12-story building a few blocks away would add 135 units of luxury housing to the hot neighborhood one subway stop from Manhattan.

He's been the target of protest by labor unions that have demonstrated near his sites with an inflatable rat. Now, not only construction workers are paying attention.

"Our resident manager is going into apartments and finding out the pipes [Boymelgreen] put in were old and the plumbing was not correct," said Rob Pua, secretary of the condo board at Newswalk, a Boymelgreen building in Prospect Heights that sits just outside Bruce Ratner's Atlantic Yards footprint.

Boymelgreen's company concedes that it has had some construction problems at Park Slope Estates, Newswalk and at nearby City View Gardens, where workers had installed the wrong air-conditioning system. He claims that any problems have been remedied, blaming the law of averages.

"We've done almost 300 units in the area and had one poor subcontractor," said Boymelgreen's director of development Israel Vanecky. "As soon as we found out, we replaced everything."

Yet Boymelgreen's own workforce believes that more fixes will be needed if Boymelgreen doesn't reform his labor practices.

"The supervisors want everything done fast so if a contractor doesn't finish something, then [the supervisor] will just tell whoever is on the site to finish it up, even if we've never done it before," said a Boymelgreen laborer, one of dozens who submitted his pay records in the class-action complaint now before Spitzer.

The worker earns \$10 an hour — a third of what a union member takes home. He says he is owed thousands in back overtime pay.

Despite the cloud hanging over him, his work and his labor practices, in June, Boymelgreen announced that he would begin turning his attention on burgeoning residential markets in Israel, Europe and India.

"...We're going global," he told the Wall Street Journal last month.



Developer Shaya Boymelgreen's Park Slope Estates on Second Street between Fourth and Fifth avenues.

The Shaya File

The Brooklyn Papers

Controversy, lawsuits and protests seem to follow developer Shaya Boymelgreen wherever he puts a shovel in the ground (and even when he doesn't). Here's a roundup:

- **UNPAID WAGES:** More than 200 workers filed complaints against the developer, charging that he owes thousands of dollars in overtime.
- **TROUBLED CONDOS:** Condo owners in Park Slope settled with the developer over leaks and other problems in their buildings.
- **WALL FALL:** Earlier this month, a wall collapsed at Boymelgreen's hotel site at 75 Smith St., causing the developer violations from the Department of Buildings.
- **EMPIRE SLOWDOWN:** Boymelgreen's \$140-million renovation of the Civil-War-era "Empire Stores" warehouse on the DUMBO waterfront is at least a year behind schedule. The warehouse was to reopen next year as a Chelsea Market-like bazaar of shops, restaurants and galleries.
- **BAD DEAL:** Boymelgreen is being sued by Henry Weinstein, a smaller Prospect Heights developer, for allegedly colluding with Bruce Ratner.
- **THE BREAK-UP:** In June, a big backer, Africa Israel Investments, cut back its partnership with Boymelgreen.
- **MIAMI COOL:** Boymelgreen unloaded seven acres of prime Miami real estate where he had planned to build flashy condos, citing changes in the condo market and higher development costs.
- **DESIGNER DELAY:** In May, retailer Parasuco sued, alleging that Boymelgreen's slow construction of a store hurt sales.
- **LUXURY PROTEST:** In April, protesters demanded that Boymelgreen include affordable units in his publicly subsidized luxury condos.
- **DUMBO DROP:** Slow sales at Boymelgreen's Beacon Tower forced him to slash the price of the feng-shui-themed condos at 85 Adams St. by 30 percent last winter.
- **SUN FIGHT:** Boymelgreen was forced to redesign 12 condos in DUMBO because their windows reached the property line of an adjacent parking lot, a violation of city law requiring a certain distance between development sites to retain light and air.

— Ariella Cohen

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Andrews: I oppose the death penalty, and ... opposed it on a state level.
Yassky: I oppose the death penalty.

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Sticky-fingered house-hunters

By Lilo H. Stainton
The Brooklyn Papers

68th Precinct

When a Dyker Heights couple opened up their home to potential buyers last month, they didn't count on a visit from an experienced jewelry thief.

But someone snatched nearly \$9,000 in jewelry from the home on 78th Street, near 13th Avenue, during the open house, police said. Plenty of people wandered through their home between noon on July 8 and 3 pm the following day.

The couple only noticed the loss last week, when the wife was getting dressed for an evening out and discovered her valuables were gone. On Aug. 15, the couple reported the theft of nearly a dozen items, including several gold bracelets valued at \$1,000 each, an antique platinum and diamond ring, worth \$2,000, a pair of Seiko watches and a \$500 gold-brided wedding band.

Rob-through

The drive-through at an 86th Street hot dog shop provided easy access to both paying customers and a burglar, police said.

A 34-year-old clerk at the Coney Island-based franchise arrived at 8 am on Aug. 18 and discovered that a thief had forced his way through the window where drivers pick up their food. Once inside the eatery, the burglar snatched \$47 from the cash register and disappeared again through the broken glass.

The hot dog haven closed for the night at 11 pm on Aug. 17. Workers at the barge shop across the street never noticed the prowler, police said.

Tools taken

A thief followed a cool breeze through an open window on 73rd Street and ransacked and robbed the apartment on the other side, police said.

The 31-year-old victim left a box fan propped in the window of his place, between Second and Third avenues,



KEY TO THE CRIMES

- Break-in
- Robbery
- Assault
- Armed robbery
- Arrest
- Purse snatch
- Car stolen
- Death

when he left around 9:30 am on Aug. 4. When he returned at midnight on Aug. 7, the robber had ransacked his bedroom and den and stolen a 9.6-volt cordless drill, a charger for the power tool, a box of drill bits to fit a different model, and a collection of silver dollars from 1870.

It's not clear why the victim waited until Aug. 18 to report the crime.

Cars vandalized

Thieves scored several high-end electronics from vehicles parked on local streets last week — and relieved one man of a handful of utility bills, according to police.

A 30-year-old Staten Island woman lost a laptop, allegedly valued at \$5,000, from her 2003 Ford on Fort Hamilton

Parkway, near 67th Street. The victim said she left the blue sedan with the doors locked at 2:45 pm on Aug. 17; an hour later, she returned to find the doors unlocked, the trunk wide open and the computer and her purse gone. The bag, a leather Coach model valued at \$150, held the usual assortment of credit cards, a cellphone and cash — \$70, in this case.

Sometime after 11 pm on Aug. 18, burglars broke into a 2005 Cadillac Escalade parked on 85th Street, near 10th Avenue. The 39-year-old

owner returned at 8 am the next morning to find the driver's-side door on his white SUV damaged and a Boss stereo and navigation system, valued at \$6,000, missing.

The crime spree continued later that day, with a 1994 Toyota Camry left on 62nd Street, near Ninth Avenue. The 38-year-old owner said he left the vehicle at 10 am on Aug. 19 and returned at 7 pm to find a back-seat window busted and a collection of credit cards, his driver's license and Social Security card

missing. On the bright side, the thief also took several bills the victim left inside the maroon sedan.

62nd Precinct

Mystery slash

A thug armed with a blade left a 43-year-old man in need of stitches on his neck — although his motive remains a mystery.

The knife-wielding stranger sneaked up behind the victim as the man walked home along Avenue T, near West

Ninth Street, around 10 pm on Aug. 19, police said. He slashed the stranger on the left side of his neck, leaving a serious wound.

The victim took a taxi to Coney Island Hospital, while police returned to search the scene. They didn't find the slasher or any signs of blood on the pavement.

Smoke screen

An armed man used a quest for cigarettes as cover to rob a bodega on New Utrecht Avenue on Aug. 20, police said.

The thug wandered into the store, near 88th Street, at 10:10 pm and asked for a pack of Newports. When the 34-year-old clerk turned around, the thief jammed a black 9-mm handgun into his ribs and demanded he open the cash register.

The victim popped the drawer, pulled out \$250, and the robber ran off with the cash. A witness saw the thief, a white man in his mid-50s, escape inside a white vehicle waiting outside.

Pay to play

A teenager lost a borrowed Sony PlayStation Portable to a thief armed with a knife on Aug. 20, police said.

The robber stopped the young victim on Benson Avenue, near Bay 17th Street, as he walked to his friend's house to return the game around 5 pm. The thug pulled the blade; the victim turned over the PSP and ran off along on Benson Avenue.

Sidekick taken

A cell phone was snatched a cellphone from a teenager leaning on a parked car near his home the night of Aug. 17, police said.

The thief ran by the 14-year-old victim as he chatted on the corner of Highways and Stillwell avenues around 9:30 pm. He grabbed the popular T-Mobile model from the teen's hand and ran off with two other men.

BYO burglar

Police arrested a 30-year-old burglar carrying an unusual collection of goods — miscellaneous keys, a police scanner, a pair of rubber gloves — with him to the crime scene.

The 21-year-old victim arrived home at 12:40 pm on Aug. 21, just in time to see the suspect try to open the locked door on her Dahli Road home, near 65th Street, with a handful of strange keys. Police picked the man up — and grabbed the scanner and gloves — before he could get inside.

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Law-breaking priest admits wrongdoing, wants ticket revoked

By Dana Rubinstein
The Brooklyn Papers

The Bay Ridge priest who got a ticket for parking illegally as he rushed into a hospital to give last rites to a dying patient is calling upon the city to show some good, old-fashioned "common sense."

"Legally, I was wrong," said Father Cletus Forson of St. Andrew of the Apostles Church. "But life should take precedence over the law."

Forson parked his priestly wheels in the no-parking lane on 49th Street outside of Maimonides Hospital on July 26, while he rushed in to administer the holy sacrament.

When he returned 20 minutes later, there was a \$115 ticket on his car, which, he pointed out, was not blocking the hospital's entrance.

He appealed the ticket, but was brushed off by the judge.

"[He said] being a priest doesn't mean you can break the law," according to Forson.

Forson is appealing the ticket again, and this time he has the support of some higher powers: City Councilmen Vincent Gentile (D-Bay Ridge) and David Weprin (D-Queens).

"The city should exhibit some common sense regarding mitigating circumstances of this type," Gentile said at a press conference in front of the hospital's Borough Park emergency room last week.

"This is not only ridiculous, it's shameful."

But a spokesman for the Department of Finance, which handles the appeals of NYPD-issued tickets, said, "The judge's only basis for dismissing [a ticket] is the law. He cannot use mitigating circumstances or decide on a situation by situation basis."



Father Cletus Forson in front of the fated "No Parking" sign on Wednesday, in Borough Park.

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5	Tue	St. Marteen	08:00am	04:00pm
6	Wed	Curacao	12:00am	08:00pm
7	Thur	Barbados	08:00am	06:00pm
8	Fri	St. Lucia	07:00am	02:00pm
9	Sat	Malaga	09:00am	02:00pm
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11	Mon	At Sea	—	—
12	Tue	Fort Lauderdale	08:00am	—

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OUR OPINION

Sham choice, process

IF YOU JUDGE ONLY by the state's seven-hour public hearing on Wednesday night, there are just two sides in the battle over Bruce Ratner's Atlantic Yards mega-development: thugs and nerds.

In the thug camp, hundreds of Ratner supporters shouted down those speaking against the project. This camp made the argument that if Atlantic Yards is not built, it is because the opponents — interlopers, Yuppies and racists, all — don't care about "the community."

Some even suggested that Atlantic Yards must be built or under-served black youths will be forced to enter a life of crime.

"We don't want to rob! We just want a job," several men chanted outside the hearing.

The need camp also showed up in force, but with a very different approach. In the face of shouts, taunts and open hostility, the nerds testi-

fied that Ratner's project is flawed and that their community will have to live with its adverse impacts forever.

The anti-Ratner crowd certainly didn't win any sympathy by complaining that their vacations were shortened by the burden of reading the state's 2,000-page draft environmental impact statement — but at least they did their job of picking through the flawed state document.

Supporters didn't do their side any favors, either, blindly following "leaders" from ACORN, BUILD or Rev. Herbert Daughtry's House of the Lord church — all of whom have received financial support from Ratner.

Many of those who spoke to bolster Ratner's fortunes were woefully uninformed about key facts: They shouted about jobs, but didn't know that the project would employ just 1,500 union construction workers — few of them black, by

the way — each year over its projected 10-year buildout.

And few supporters seemed to know that the project includes only 2,250 "affordable" units — and 40 percent of them are earmarked for families earning more than \$70,000.

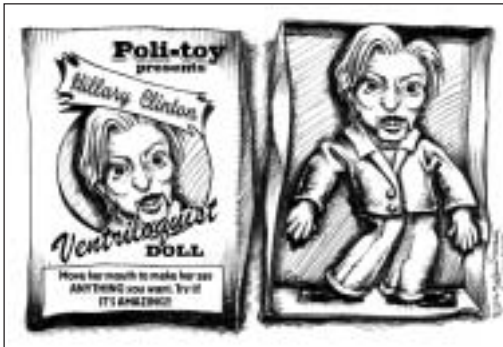
Ratner supporters present a false choice: build or the black community suffers.

City Councilwoman Letitia James (D-Prospect Heights) saw through that lie. Like many elected officials and residents of the area, she wants development of the Atlantic Yards site — but she wants it done correctly.

James spoke eloquently about attending the funeral of a girl who died of asthma — and how many more youngsters would suffer from the chronic lung condition if Ratner's project is built. For this, she was shouted down by the thugs.

Shame.

ALL DRAWN OUT



Crisis Planning

LETTERS

I'm sick of your anti-Ratner slant

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All letters must be signed and include the writer's home address and phone number (only the writer's name and neighborhood are published with the letter). Letters may be edited and will not be returned. The earlier in the week you send your letter, the better.

To the editor,

I would like to comment your anti-Ratner slant in your Aug. 12 edition.

In the preamble of your editorial, "Times in Bruce's Corner," you mention that Ratner is building the Times' building, but that has nothing intrinsically to do with the Atlantic Yards project. You are merely trying to imply that the Times has been influenced by this.

You then proceed to mis-pick the Times' editorial in 19 points, all of which I found objectionable in one way or another. Yet you make not one favorable comment. It couldn't be that bad.

In the story, "Ratner's Ohio family chips in," you emphasize that his sale of shares to a family corporation will have a deleterious effect on the operation of the project, implying that a "scrooge-effect" would prevail, thereby prejudicing and frightening the future tenants.

You quote Daniel Goldstein, a rabid opponent, rather than Robert Keith, a moderate who is in favor of the project. You have my telephone number.

In "The survey says," your subhead was childish in its use of the word "hate." Who made the survey? Were they for or against Ratner? Surveys can be like statistics — you can make them say anything you want.

I didn't find any material that I considered pro-Ratner.

Robert Keith, Prospect Heights

No play in tea room

To the editor,

As a longtime resident and mother

in Park Slope (my children are older

— 16 and 21), I am distressed over not being able to enjoy the Tea Lounge on Union Street. I have given up going there to enjoy a cup of coffee, or talk to a friend or read the newspaper, since it has become a toddler, infant hangout.

I am not saying that children should not be allowed inside, only that they not be allowed to run rampant and shriek.

Luckily, Park Slope is adjacent to some of the prettiest greenery, playgrounds, sprinkler systems and wading pools in all of Brooklyn. There are children's programs in the libraries, at the conservatory, at the Puppet Theater on Sixth Ave., to name just a few. In short, there is no shortage of places to go where children can run, play and be entertained.

Having children run and scream in a coffee bar is rude and disrespectful to other patrons (and the management), but it is also dangerous.

Children do not need encouragement to scald themselves with hot liquids or hit their heads on sharp edges, or accidentally knock over someone's lamp.

Maybe the Tea Lounge could post a sign respectfully asking parents to control their children's behavior or the management will exercise their right to ask parents to remove their children.

The parents and the children might even benefit in the long run by learning how to behave in a variety of places.

Barbara Isola, Park Slope

Blotter is great

To the editor,

I just wanted to write you and express my thanks and appreciation for your "Police Blotter." I enjoy it so much and feel guilty at my enjoyment and laughter at your clever and witty descriptive writing. It isn't as though I'm laughing at others' misfortunes, no, but you make the thieves and criminals look so stupid and inept and bumbling!

I'm a grandmother who is writing my lifetime adventures of experiences — it's mainly for my own therapy and enjoyment and to share with family and friends, but I know how hard it is to write humorously.

Gloria Mensch, Cobble Hill

Postage please

To the editor,

Homebound-seniors, disabled people and those out of town may be unable to get to the polls on Election Day.

For them, and many others, the absentee ballot is a godsend. The absentee ballot ensures that every citizen's vote is countable and counted. So why is it that no one seems to be able to tell me exactly how much postage to affix to the absentee ballot mailer?

I called the League of Women Voters, the Board of Elections and eventually the Post Office for an answer to what I thought was a simple question. No one knew. I was given some very interesting answers, though. I was told,

"To be safe, just put two stamps on it." No surprise; THIS suggestion came from a Post Office representative.

I also heard, "That's a good question. I don't know." I also heard (best yet), "Bring it to the Post Office. They'll be able to tell you." Duh! If you are able to get to the Post Office to determine the proper postage, you just might not need an absentee ballot in the first place.

In the 2004 election, 81,954 absentee ballots were mailed out to New York City voters, but only 62,184 were returned. Did the 19,770 absentee absentee ballots change the election results? Perhaps I wasn't the only one who couldn't figure out the proper postage issue.

Diget Dupont-Day, Bay Ridge

Editor's note: The Board of Elections told us that one stamp would suffice.

Dog days

To the editor,

The debate over whether dogs should be allowed off-leash in our parks prompted these lines of humble verse:

Walkers unleash their poodles on
Entering the park just after dawn
Paddling to the pet pool to paddle
Cannes gather speed, like Cadillac
Laces tooling along the open road
"Watch out, squirrel; watch out, road!"
Lacking only the Caddie muffers,
Loud enough to rouse all shufflers.

Din, then dis-er, fools the air
Waking sleeping Slippers near.
Ruff! Woof! Rrrr! Hark!

A summer's day in Prospect Park.

Leon Fretlich, Park Slope



Brooklyn's **REAL** newspapers

Published weekly by Brooklyn Paper Publications Inc.
at 55 Washington St., Ste 624, Brooklyn, NY 11201
Phone (718) 834-9350
Established 1978. Copyright 2006. • Ed Weinroba, President (ext 105)

PUBLISHER Celia Weinroba (ext 104)
EDITOR Gersh Kuntzman (ext 119)
SENIOR EDITOR/PRODUCTION MANAGER Vince DiMiceli (ext 125)
GO BROOKLYN/BROOKLYN BRIDE EDITOR Lisa J. Curtis (ext 137)
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OFFICE MANAGER Chara Brown (ext 101)

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BATTLE...

Continued from page 1

cheered by scores of construction workers. Any who did not, was jeered by them. Supporters repeatedly derided opponents as white people out of touch with the needs of black Brooklyn.

Assemblyman Roger Green (D-Prospect Heights) stuck to that story line with a preacher's cadence. "I was born in Brooklyn and I was raised in Brooklyn," he said. "Some of us were here before other people got here! Some of you have never been in the Fort Greene Houses. Some of you have never dared to go to the Farragut Houses. We will not be lectured to."

Green spoke of the "conspiracy of silence" that deprives "the black man" of economic empowerment — but also said it was a "moral imperative" to bring the project's scale down by 30 to 40 percent.

Next, Assemblywoman Joan Millman (D-Park Slope) complained that the Empire State Development Corporation released the project's draft environmental impact statement and scheduled the public hearing during the summer, "when many people are on their vacation."

She was hissed.

"Too many politicians in Brooklyn!" one man yelled.

The same man later cheered when another politician — this time, project supporter Assemblyman Karim Camara (D-Crown Heights) — mentioned high black unemployment.

"When people ask me, 'How can you be for the project?' I return the question, 'How could I not be for this project?' We need jobs. We need affordable housing. Do this for every black man who needs a job."

Ratner claims there would be 1,500 construction jobs per year over the 10-year buildout of the project.

People speak

When the unelected masses got their turn to speak, the back-and-forth battle — complete with the breakdown in civility — continued.

A man upon upstate Pleasantville spoke of traffic, the lack of greenspace and how historic restaurant Gage & Toller was forced to close a few years back because Ratner "failed to live up to the promises he made at Metrotech."

He was followed by Umar Jordan, who ridiculed his complaints.

"If you never been in the Marcy projects, you're not from Brooklyn," he said. "Go back to Pleasantville."

Jordan, who lives in Bedford-Stuyvesant, added, "Black men and women are forced to rob because you won't give them a job! You're complaining about the height of the buildings and this and that. Well, welcome to the hood!"

Park Slope civics

Several members of the Park Slope Civic Council — speaking in three-minute allotments — read the group's testimony into the record.

Lumi Rolley began by complaining that the hearing was scheduled "at a time when so many Brooklynites are squeezing in the last of their summer vacations."

The group's testimony focused on the DEIS's failure to mitigate increased subway crowding, the loss of street parking and gridlock conditions.

Daughter, whose House of the Lord Pentecostal Church is located in nearby Boerum Hill, followed the Civic Council's by-the-book presentation with an impassioned sermon that argued that the area where Ratner wants to build was "written off" by the city for years.

"Nobody stepped up — but Forest City Ratner had a vision. So why are you holding this [project] against Forest City Ratner when development is going on all over Brooklyn with non-union work? And that bank building that you hold so sacred? That developer said there ain't going to be affordable housing there! Protest against that!"

He was followed by Community Board 6 Chairman Jerry Armer, who also complained about the lack of time for a full analysis of the 2,000-page DEIS.

"This is a time when most people are away," Armer said. "Even psychiatrists, which some of us sitting here may need when this is all over, are on vacation in August."

Few traffic concerns

Before taking public testimony, ESDC officials offered brief presentations about the \$4.2-billion project and its impacts.

Just three minutes was spent on traffic.

"The impacted locations are reduced substantially by various mitigations," but there will still be what was called non-mitigatable conditions," said ESDC consultant Philip Habib. "There will be traffic congestion on Flatbush and Atlantic avenues and on Dean Street."

Another ESDC official spoke of a "shortfall in the number of elementary and intermediate school seats" as a result of the project. "We considered that to be a significant adverse impact," said the consultant.

By the time the ESDC presentations were done, 250 people had already registered for a three-minute timeout. If each had been able to speak for the allotted time, the meeting would have taken 12-13 hours.

As it is, the scheduled four-hour hearing was extended to 11:30 p.m. allowing slightly more than 100 people to speak. The only moment of comic relief came from a speaker who identified himself only as "Mr. X" and was wearing mirrored sunglasses.

He compared the project to a drug deal and offered to put Ratner in "a tight-ass mini-skirt," drawing laughter from both sides.

The remaining 200 or so speakers were told to submit their testimony in writing or attend a second hearing on Sept. 12 — but they were not promised a spot at the head of the line.

At the end of the long night, longtime opponent of the project, Daniel Goldstein of Development Don't Destroy Brooklyn, said he found the whole event a depressing "circus."

"This hearing was meaningless," he said.

"It became a shouting match rather than an analysis of the flawed DEIS. Ratner's supporters don't want to hear that opponents of Atlantic Yards do want affordable housing and jobs."



Some don't get a say

The Brooklyn Papers

Scores of people hoping to testify about Bruce Ratner's Atlantic Yards project never got their three-minute allotment of fame, despite signing up before Wednesday's hearing even got under way at 4:30 p.m. The scheduled four-hour public hearing was expanded to seven, but about 300 people who signed up did not get a chance to speak.

"Only 100 people spoke, less than 20 percent! It's not fair," said Timothy Logan, chair of the New York City chapter of the Sierra Club. Those who did not get time at the microphone were

invited to submit their speeches in writing or attend a second hearing on Sept. 12. "I'll send in my piece," said Steve Sullivan, a project opponent who got on line at 4:30 and left, frustrated, at 10:30. "I would've really loved to speak."

At one point in the evening hours, members of the overflow crowd started yelling out, "I've been here since 3!" Evangelina Porter, a project supporter from Crown Heights, was one of the unlucky ones who showed up early, but left empty-handed.

"I have to get up early to go to my job," she said. "I can't wait around here all night."

Many project opponents complained that the hearing should not have taken place in the summer, when many people are on vacation. But plenty of people crowded the 880-seat Klitgard Auditorium on Jay Street to make their feelings known.

Officials with the Empire State Development Corporation refused to allow people in the auditorium until someone from inside left, leaving hundreds of people waiting in line as the hearing went on.

"I have to get inside," said Elaine McNeil, a self-described "Ratner girl," who supports the project. After several hours, she did.

— Ariella Cohen



New Jersey Nets Vince Carter (l) and Jason Kidd flank team owner Bruce Ratner.

Brooklyn, 2016

By Gersh Kuntzman

The Brooklyn Papers

Here's what the area around Bruce Ratner's Atlantic Yards mega-development will look like if the 16-tower, arena, residential, office and hotel complex is built, according to new renderings created by a Brooklyn photographer.

"I was bothered by the fact that Ratner's renderings make the impact look less because the photos were from so far away," said the photographer, Jonathan Barkey, a Brooklyn Heights resident.

"But when you show his plans in the proper context, you see how colossal it is." In one series of before-and-after shots, a wall of Ratner buildings completely blocks views of the Williamsburg Savings Bank tower. In another, a quiet Dean Street playground becomes overshadowed by five buildings.

Barkey said all his photo illustrations were compiled using the density and bulk figures in the state's draft environmental impact statement.

"How big are his buildings? They're roughly the size of the buildings you see when you look across the river at Lower Manhattan," he said.

"It's almost science fiction that they would put something like this in the middle of a garden district like Prospect Heights."

Spokespeople for Ratner would not comment on the validity of Barkey's renderings, but Daniel Goldstein, spokesman for Development Don't Destroy Brooklyn, had one word when he saw them: "Wow."

In a statement, Goldstein went further: "In the DEIS, Ratner and the state of New York say that the project would not change the neighborhood character... See the renderings and draw your own unbiased conclusions."

The complete set of Barkey's illustrations can be viewed at <http://www.phuse.com/atlanticyardsimulation>.



Ratner's bussed-in lovefest

By Ariella Cohen

The Brooklyn Papers

Atlantic Yards developer Bruce Ratner bussed in basketball-loving kids, senior citizens and even a few of his New Jersey Nets stars for a pep rally minutes before Wednesday's public hearing on his mega-development.

Ratner didn't testify at the hearing — he didn't need to, considering all the peacocks that were being sung to the Cleveland-born developer by many of the same elected officials who later crossed Jay Street to put their affection on the public record.

Borough President Markowitz asked the crowd of reporters and bussed-in supporters to "close your eyes and see what I see... A whole new city center. Brooklyn is a world-class city and we deserve Atlantic Yards."

"It wasn't long ago that we couldn't get \$4 million invested in Brooklyn," he added. "Now we have \$4 billion invested in Brooklyn."

Singer Roberts Flack said she couldn't wait to sing "at this great big arena" that Ratner intends to build at the intersection of Flatbush and Atlantic avenues.

Assemblyman Joseph Lentol added, "Bruce Ratner is one of the good guys."

Even a reporter — Stephen Witt, from the Sheepshead Bay-based Courier-Life newspaper chain — got so caught up in the lovefest that he gave Ratner a bear hug.

Meanwhile, kids, many sporting "Yes In My Back Yard" buttons given to them by the developer, giddily snapped pictures of Nets stars Vince Carter and Jason Kidd on their cellphone cameras.

"People are going to think I digitally altered this photo," said Tal Schor, who was bussed in from Flatbush. She showed off her shot of Carter.

The rally was long on love, short on information.

When one union worker and project supporter was asked if he knew that not all the housing at the project was affordable, he simply shrugged and said, "I don't know about that part."

ATLANTIC YARDS COUNTDOWN

27

DAYS UNTIL CLOSE OF PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD
(As of Saturday, Aug. 26)

The Empire State Development Corporation invited Brooklynites to comment on the agency's draft environmental impact statement for the Atlantic Yards project by sending letters to Maria Mooney, ESDC, 633 Third Ave., New York, NY 10017 or e-mailing atlanticyards@esdempire.state.ny.us. We've asked readers to send copies of their testimony to newsroom@brooklynpapers.com. Here is this week's letter:

Dear Ms. Mooney:

I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed Atlantic Yards project. While I support developing this part of Brooklyn, I believe that the extent of this project is out of proportion to what can be accommodated in this neighborhood in terms of disruption to all aspects of daily life in this part of Brooklyn including the impact on population, traffic, the school system, the environment, and other daily life issues affecting surrounding neighborhoods.

I support a smaller project — which is more likely to be embraced rather than resignedly tolerated by local residents and businesses.

Having lived in Park slope for 13 years, I have come to treasure the architecture and the access to cultural and business opportunities, public transportation and therefore other parts of Brooklyn in Manhattan. An arena simply does not fit into this neighborhood.

I'm afraid that big business is winning out over community involvement in terms of having the opportunity for meaningful input into this proposition. The public-comment period of 66 days since the Empire State Development Corporation released the draft environmental impact statement is inadequate, and the timing is inconvenient, as Brooklyn's community boards are in recess.

The 2,000-page study is very difficult for the average person to assimilate and therefore warrants a longer period for a public response.

Karen D. Gerber, Park Slope

There's 1 more chance to vent

The Brooklyn Papers

The Empire State Development Corporation has set aside a second chance for the public to testify on the Atlantic Yards project.

Although ESDC initially used the term "community forum" to describe the Sept. 12 hearing, officials later told The Brooklyn Papers that comments made there will be a part of the official record — just like this week's official "public hearing." The Sept. 12 forum will begin at 4 p.m. at the Klitgard Auditorium, 285 Jay St. in Downtown.

Towns, Barron speak on Yards

The Brooklyn Papers

Two candidates for the 10th congressional district stopped by the offices of The Brooklyn Papers this week. Here is what they said about Atlantic Yards.

Rep. Ed Towns: If it is this project, or no project, I'd go with it. I watched what happened with the downtown area of Cleveland, with the arena there. The downtown area was dead. The Washington, DC, area — they bought an arena, and now there are all these stores and restaurants as a result of the arena. Baltimore, as well. A lot of economic opportunities present themselves when you have an arena and you bring in people. I think that having the Nets and the arena in Brooklyn is a good thing. I support that. I do think the project should be downsized.

City Councilman Charles Barron (D-Canarsie): It's environmentally disastrous for us, meaning the pollution, the congestion. The affordable housing is nonsense. Maybe 20 percent is low-income, but 30 percent is luxury, so it's instant gentrification. There's not enough open space, not enough schools, firehouses, to go with this new community. This project makes no sense for the community and 100 percent sense for the developer.



Councilman Charles Barron (top) and Rep. Ed Towns, in the Brooklyn Papers offices.

Fightin' Eleventh candidates weigh in on Yards

The Brooklyn Papers

Two candidates for the 11th congressional district — which includes parts of Brooklyn Heights, Boerum Hill, Park Slope and Prospect Heights — support Bruce Ratner's Atlantic Yards mega-development, two oppose it. Here's what they said in a debate last week in the offices of The Brooklyn Papers.

State Sen. Carl Andrews (D-Crown Heights): I support the project. There's no such thing as a perfect plan [but] the [affordable] housing component is something I'm very excited about. The economic development, the jobs that it brings, that's another thing I'm excited about.

City Councilwoman Yvette Clarke (D-Crown Heights): I support the project [because] the benefits outweigh the burdens. As it is today, my observation is that the process has been completely legal. The developer has been very sensitive to the community's concerns; he moved and budged. I've never witnessed that with any developers in the city of New York. I doubt Donald Trump would have ever



Andrews



Clarke



Owens



Yassky

conceded anything with respect to community concerns... The economic opportunities here are multiple — it has a ripple effect... For entrepreneurs, there's an opportunity to expand either through contracting opportunities or just their vision of what their business — retail or whatever — can bring. Am I completely happy about [Atlantic Yards]? No. But what I do know is that here, the benefits outweigh

the burdens.

Chris Owens (D): I oppose the project primarily because democracy has been stripped out of this — and that creates a foundation that you can't go back from. In terms of benefits outweighing the costs, there is not that much housing. What we have instead is a potential ripple effect that will displace poor, working-class, middle-class people from this borough for

years. And then there are the promises that have been made. We were told originally that there were going to be 10,000 construction jobs. But then they said, "Oh wait — it's not 10,000 construction jobs, it's 10,000 job-years." That's really 1,000 jobs for 10 years. There's a big difference. And I haven't even gotten into the traffic and the environmental stuff.

City Councilman David Yassky (D-

Brooklyn Heights): I do not support the project. It's way too big, it needs to be brought down significantly. I'd like to see a project go forward, but it must be done right. And that means considerably smaller and with real attention to the traffic problems that will envelope these neighborhoods. And I disagree with Councilwoman Clarke that there's been ongoing response. The project on the table now is bigger — more square feet — than originally proposed. So rather than shrinking, it's growing. And there has been absolutely zero attention paid to the traffic, despite literally dozens of intersections that will be permanently affected.

Clarke (rebuttal): We're in a crisis for affordable housing! And I see this as a possible catalyst and a precedent for how we move forward in terms of development in this town, and making sure that affordable housing is a component of every development that takes place. Luxury housing has been reigning supreme. And to say that there are only 1,000 construction jobs per year — that's 1,000 more than we have now!

Owens (rebuttal): The Councilwoman

misinterprets my point. Of course the thousands jobs matter, and I want to see 1,000 jobs — and more — but I think the developer has been consistently misleading. Anyone can develop affordable housing and commercial space. This project is not the only option.

Andrews (rebuttal): I think as an elected official, what I have to do is get the constituents into this discussion. One of the things that you have to do is hold the developer accountable and encourage them to build more housing... for low-income senior citizens. When the senior citizens' rent goes up, their social security doesn't go up. Their pension plans don't go up.

Yassky (rebuttal): Councilwoman Clarke's right that there are genuine benefits that could be achieved here. It's such a shame that the developer has been intransigent and that the governor has been completely absent. A responsible governor would say, "We want to see the development, we want to see an arena, we want to see housing. We just don't want to see it at this gigantic scale, and we don't want to see it done without any traffic mitigation."

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BROOKLYN BRIEFS

City: Ditch fix is on the way



The Brooklyn Papers

The fix is in for the ditch.

A top city planner has drawn up a new plan to build homes atop the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway ditch that has cut off the Red Hook waterfront from Cobble Hill and Carroll Gardens since the 1950s.

"The question is not to whether to build, but how much to build," the consulting team of Alex Garvin and Associates said in a statement.

Residents have long begged the city to build a platform over the sunken roadway that bisects Hicks Street between Woodhull and Kane streets. Two decades ago, a plan to do just that died when engineers discovered that decking over the stinky expressway would create new air pollution.

"We didn't have the air-scrubbing technologies then," said Craig Hamnerman, district manager for Community Board 6.

But the Garvin and Associates idea could move forward as part of a Bloomberg Administration effort to plan for the one million more New Yorkers who are expected to be living here by 2050.

Garvin's team — which also worked on the city's failed 2012 Olympic bid — laid out three development plans ranging from a 200 rowhouse subdivision to a denser nabe of 12-story buildings containing 1,500 new units.

Residents loved the sound of that — or anything that could heal the neighborhood's rumbling gash.

"I want to see it covered," said longtime resident Anthony Valente.

In addition to covering the BOE, the planner recommended building atop the Prospect Expressway in the South Slope and over a vacant freight yard in Bay Ridge.

— Ariella Cohen and Rebecca Balhaus



Backyard bush blooms Ridge's best blossom

The Brooklyn Papers

In the tidy backyard of a red, white and blue Victorian house, the hydrangea was anointed the official flower of Bay Ridge last week, making the neighborhood the first Brooklyn community to have its own floral symbol.

In a ceremony more reminiscent of rural Iowa than hardscrabble Brooklyn, a bouquet of delicate Bay Ridgeites — many in flowery attire — murmured with pleasure as local dignitaries stood in front of a 75-year-old *Hydrangea macrophylla*, next to an American flag and white gazebo, and extolled Bay Ridge.

"This could be almost anywhere in small-town U.S.A.," said City Councilman Vince Gentile (D-Bay Ridge), his face beaming.

Small town, indeed.

The crowd recited the "Pledge of Allegiance" and then repaired to the blue and white wraparound porch for iced tea, lemonade, and crumb cake served on a three-tier platter.

The hydrangea's climb to become Bay Ridge's floral emblem goes back to 2004, when the Garden Club of Bay Ridge was asked to select a flower to represent the community.

The other blossoms vying for the vaunted title were camellias, pansies, tulips, violets, and yellow roses.

"The hydrangea got the most votes [because] it is a very pretty, big flower and it comes in many colors," said Helen Leonard, Garden Club president, who wore a blue flowered dress, matching flats, and yellow flower earrings for the occasion.

So, now that Bay Ridge has decided to identify itself with a flower, will Park Slope be next?

"This may become a trend," speculated Lecan Lavin, spokeswoman for the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, adding that the forsythia has been Brooklyn's official flower since 1940.

Lavin said that the forsythia is the borough's symbol because "it is a very strong, hardy plant, with characteristics emblematic of strong and hardy Brooklynites."

— Dana Rubinstein

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— Dana Rubinstein

Tree-huggers jeer skeeter spraying

The Brooklyn Papers

City health officials sprayed mosquito-killing pesticide over a wide swath of South Slope, Green-Wood Cemetery and Sunset Park on Monday night — and a handful of environmentalists greeted the toxic cloud with jeers.

"The Department of Health is supposed to be protecting our health, not causing diseases," said Mitchell Cohen, a coordinator for the No Spray Coalition, which filed a lawsuit against the Health Department in 2000 that remains in litigation.

The activists claim that the anti-skeeter spray causes cancer, irritates lungs and



A protester dons protective gear before mosquito spraying in Kensington.

harm the environment.

They also maintain that, contrary to city policy, the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene gives so little advance notice that residents don't have the time to take many of the precautions recommended by the city itself, including remaining indoors and covering food.

But the Health Department, which has been spraying for mosquitoes since the arrival of the West Nile Virus to New York City in 1999, called such spraying "an important part of efforts to control the spread" of the disease.

A 2001 Health Department study concluded that proper use of the pesticides has no significant effect on human health.

— Rubinstein

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The Brooklyn Papers' essential guide to the Borough of Kings

August 26, 2006



'Forbidden' fruit: Among the dozen films being shown as part of the "New York Korean Film Festival" at BAM Rose Cinemas is "Forbidden Quest" (pictured far left, and top center), Kim Dae-woo's lavish costume film about a man in Korea's feudal past. Also screening are "The Charming Girl" (above), "Wedding Campaign" (third from left) and "Grain in Ear" (second from left).

Made in Korea

Korean Film Festival celebrates cinema's renaissance and Lee Man-hee

By Michael Wells
for The Brooklyn Papers

Somewhere deep inside them, in some pessimistic corner, the creators and fans are always anxiously waiting for the other shoe to drop. But so far the renaissance of South Korea's cinema, which began in the late '90s after almost three decades of doldrums, is holding strong.

This is one of the relatively few local film industries thriving in the face of the global Hollywood juggernaut. According to the authoritative Darcy's Korean Film Page (www.koreainfilm.org), Korea has almost doubled its yearly output in a decade and local movies now regularly capture over 50 percent of the annual box office despite Harry Potter, Superman and all their ilk.

It also, incidentally, turns out some awful good movies.

By now it's a tradition for BAMcinematek to host one leg of the New York Korean Film Festival; the fourth annual visitation spans Aug. 30-Sept. 3 (preceded by screenings at other venues in Manhattan). But in all the attention paid to Korean film's present, its past is virtually unknown to most of the world, and not enormously appreciated even at home. This year, the fest programmers have decided to do something about that with a retrospective section, a feature they hope to make a regular part of the NYKFF.

The eight recent selections at BAM will be joined by four classics from recently rediscovered director Lee Man-hee: the macabre thriller "The Devil's Stairway" (1964; screens Aug. 30) and the melodramas "Water Mill" (1966; Aug. 30), "A Road to Return" (1967; Aug. 31), and "A Way to Sampo" (1975; Aug. 31).

Sueyong Park-Primiano, a doctoral candidate at New York University specializing in Korean film, will lecture on Lee at the Korea Society on Aug. 29. Commenting via e-mail, she says that it was Lee's 1967 gangster film "The Starting Point" that "shifted my interest from contemporary Korean films to 1950s and 1960s Korean cinema. Until then, I thought most of the older films were weepy melodramas with obvious genre conventions, but within the first few minutes, I was



Rediscovered master: Four classics by Lee Man-hee will be shown at the festival at the BAM Rose Cinemas, including 1967's "A Road to Return."

gripped by the narrative and the fast action editing."

In a mere 15-year career, Lee directed 51 movies (of which roughly 24 are known to survive); he succumbed to cirrhosis and cancer while working at the editing table on "Way to Sampo."

"He was generally known to be a commercially popular filmmaker," continues Park-Primiano, "but he was also respected as an artistic filmmaker by his contemporaries and film critics. He excelled in many genres, and I suspect this is one of the reasons why he may not have been studied as an auteur...until now of course. I know of at least two Korean scholars whose dissertation topic is on Lee." The popularity and acclaim of Lee's war sagas and crime stories "opened the door to his experiments with social dramas that explored the lives of the disenfranchised and the low life." Two sides of this coin are well demonstrated by "Water Mill" and "Road to Return," which use widely differing settings

— a rural village in the historical past and the contemporary middle-class city — to portray marriages broken down by outside social stresses and eventual infidelity. For all the soap operatic qualities, they're both marked by an exquisitely sensitive eye for the way the characters fit into a landscape or a cityscape that overwhelms them, just as societal convention does.

Moving from Lee's '60s movies to those from the past year or so is like journeying to another planet. The rigid familial and romantic proprieties give way to a world of footloose singles searching for their mates via cell phone and Internet dating in "My Scary Girl" (2006; Sept. 1) and "Wedding Campaign" (2005; Sept. 3). Each attempts, with fair success, to put a new spin on current Korean cinema's most heavily exploited genre, the romantic comedy. The former movie folks in murder and financial efforts at corpse disposal; the latter explores the little-known world of the substantial Korean diaspora in

CINEMA

"The 2006 New York Korean Film Festival" plays Aug. 30-Sept. 3 at BAM Rose Cinemas (30 Lafayette Ave. at Ashland Place in Fort Greene). Admission is \$10, or \$5 for seniors, students with ID (Monday-Thursday) and children. For more information, call (718) 636-4102 or visit the Web site www.nykff.org. Complete festival schedule and related events at www.koreainfilm.org. Sueyong Park-Primiano will speak on the life and films of Lee Man-hee on Aug. 29 at 6:30 pm at the Korea Society, 950 Third Ave., at 57th St., eighth floor in Manhattan. Admission is \$5. For more information, call (212) 759-7525.

of all places, Uzbekistan. ("Rules of Dating" (2005), playing Sept. 2, also takes a crack at the formula).

Koreans abroad are examined to very different effect in "Grain in Ear" (2005; Sept. 3), a co-production with China about a Korean-Chinese single mother ground down by her life in a bleak industrial town. The Lee Man-hee approach of infusing social comment with narrative and visual fire is eschewed in favor of the stark minimalism that seems obligatory in socially conscious art films from Asia these days — though the shocking final twist is worthy of him.

The eclecticism of the Korean renaissance is further testified by the psychological character study-romance "The Charming Girl" (2005; Sept. 1); the animated science fiction adventure "Robotech: The Shadow Chronicles" (2006; Sept. 3), a continuation of the internationally popular TV series; and "The Aggressives!" (2005; Sept. 3) about the relationships among a group of teenage in-line skaters.

One of the most intriguing of the new batch is director Kim Dae-woo's "Forbidden Quest" (2006; Sept. 2) — a lavish costume film about a man in Korea's feudal past. Following an aristocratic scholar as he plunges into the underground world of illegal (and enormously popular) erotic literature, it shows unquenchable human urges battling cruel repression and makes it look like fun. Vigorous to a fault, funny, sexy, touching and occasionally violent, it might have made Lee Man-hee proud if he had lived to see it.

ART



Feeling spent

The current exhibition at the d.u.m.b.o. arts center, "Point of Purchase" (PoP), explores the American fascination with shopping. Curated by Gretchen Wagner of the Museum of Modern Art, the show features works in a variety of media by 13 artists, including Monika Sliadi. In her series "On Display," Sliadi mines window tableaux for inspiration. (A detail of her "Wired" is pictured at left.)

Also featured in PoP, Julia Christensen's video documents how communities have transformed abandoned Wal-Mart, Kmart and Target box stores in unusual ways,

while Rosemary Williams explores her reactions to St. Paul, Minnesota's Mall of America in her immense installation.

"Point of Purchase" is on display at the d.u.m.b.o. arts center (30 Washington St. at Water Street in DUMBO) through Sept. 24. Gallery hours are Thursday through Monday, from 10 am to 6 pm. For more information, call (718) 694-0831.

— Lisa J. Curtis

TV

Hungry 4 love

While some women might settle for reading gossip mags for info about their celebrity crushes, East Flatbush resident Dominique Majors has decided to publicly crusade for the attention of Flavor Flav on his reality TV show, "Flavor of Love 2."

So far the 23-year-old model — who Flav dubbed "Nibblz" after he likened her bold, assertive approach to that of ear-biting boxer Mike Tyson — has escaped elimination on the two-hour season premiere and two subsequent episodes.

"You're knocking me out of the box," the Public Enemy alum assured Nibblz (pictured) in the first show.

Nibblz told GO Brooklyn that she decided to compete for Flav's affections because, "I think every girl would love to be someone's arm candy — somebody's trophy girl. It's hard to say 'no' to that. The lifestyle is very appealing, to be some famous man's woman."

The series, which continues on Sunday, pits Nibblz against 20 women from all over the country who attempt to win Flav's heart while living in his crib — er, Hollywood mansion. (Apparently, the girl Flav chose on the first round of "Flavor of Love" "put a dent" in him, so he had to create "Flavor of Love 2" to find a new Mz Right.)

Nibblz's competition is tough. And by tough, I mean they're not above a physical alteration — a la Jerry Springer — to carve out their turf in Flav's house. In fact, one contestant claims her bed by punching and pulling the hair of the woman who got there first.

But when another adversary proves to be incapable of controlling her bowel movements on the "Sumthin' Stinkin' in the House of Flav" episode, it seems as though Brooklyn's well-groomed Nibblz is the obvious choice for golden-toothed Flav.

Nibblz said she was most surprised that her competitors were "so uptight about sexuality."

"In my circle, we all kiss girls and we like to go to the strip clubs, and I just thought that's what 20-year-olds did," explained our libertine homiegirl. "But even the girls who were saying 'no, no' were acting 'yes, yes!'"

Nibblz's strategy for winning seems to be a cerebral one, choosing to psych out the other bachelorettes by assuring them that she'd make a better lover for Flav because, "For the record, I have no gag reflex."

That's our girl! Off camera, Nibblz claims that although the show is an "exaggeration of your personality," it does represent what she's like in real life, because she's "into anything naughty."

"I meant everything I said, my dirty comments," maintains Nibblz. "But for every dirty comment they left in, they left out the 10 witty ones I made because they weren't as entertaining. I went out there to be outrageous and a little offensive and to be the bad girl."

Because Flav maintains that he handpicked the contestants for "Flavor of Love 2," in an attempt to weed out the "gold diggers" from the first series, whether our Nibblz wins or loses, one could say that it was an honor just to be chosen.

"Flavor of Love 2" airs Sunday nights at 10 pm on VH1. For more information, visit <http://sps.vh1.com>.

— LJC

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The write stuff

Newly formed BrooklynONE Theater to stage festival of one-act plays in Bay Ridge

By Jovana Rizzo
for The Brooklyn Papers

The borough's aspiring playwrights are given a voice and spotlight with the birth of BrooklynONE Theater, which launched with a party on Aug. 4, where they announced their upcoming festival of new, one-act plays.

BIT is the brainchild of Anthony Marino, who has been involved in Brooklyn community theater for 10 years, and Tom Kane, a self-proclaimed "Wall Street guy who likes to write."

"Getting people excited about theater in Brooklyn is hard," said Marino, the BIT artistic director. "There is so much talent here and nowhere to go with it, and they deserve attention."

Marino has a degree in theater performance from Wagner College and now teaches theater at PS 180 in Borough Park.

BIT's story began when Marino and Kane started a playwright contest and sifted through 40 applicants to find the best of Brooklyn's undiscovered talent. Since both Marino and Kane have been involved in community theater, they started to advertise the contest through word of mouth in the Brooklyn theater scene and ads in local papers.

On Aug. 4, they hosted "A Playwright Grows in Brooklyn," the launch party and awards ceremony for the inaugural 2006-2007 season. At Ray's Lounge in Bay Ridge, the nine winning plays received awards in three categories: grammar school, high school and college, and adult.

One of the three winning adult plays is "Just My Luck," written by Nicholas Vigorito, Jr. who has been writing and pursuing theater for the past decade.

"The tagline is 'A hapless mugger chooses the wrong victim, or does he?'" said Vigorito. "The mugger has lamented his whole life about not having any luck. It's a cute play and has a message about paying more attention to signs in your life, and it has a surprise ending."

Although Vigorito lives in Dyker Heights and grew up in Sunset Park,



At Ray's Lounge in Bay Ridge on Aug. 4, (clockwise from top) Steve Ryan and Colette LeRoy perform a scene from "Brooklyn Bound," one of the winning entries of BrooklynONE Theater's "A Playwright Grows in Brooklyn" contest; BIT Artistic Director Anthony Marino congratulates winners; and singer-songwriter Andrew Gerardi performs BIT's theme song.

this is his play's Brooklyn debut. (He said it has already been performed in Manhattan and Hollywood.)

"Graffiti," written by Italo Tinali, a senior at Xaverian High School in Bay Ridge, and Anthony Napoli, a senior at

THEATER

BrooklynONE Theater's "A Playwright Grows in Brooklyn" festival takes place Sept. 13 and 18 at 7 pm at Ray's Lounge (9504 Third Ave. at 96th Street in Bay Ridge). Tickets are \$10, free for seniors and children younger than 13 years old. For more information, visit the Web site www.brooklynonetheater.org.

Regis High School in Manhattan, won in the high school and college division. Napoli said he's nervous, but excited, to see their show performed for the first time.

"Graffiti" is about kids who are bored with their own lives and find a can of spray paint. Their tags symbolize their character, and every time they do something considered immoral, their tags are defiled," Napoli explained.

All of the winning adult, high school and college playwrights will have their works produced and performed during the BIT's "A Playwright Grows in Brooklyn" festival on Sept. 15 and 16 at Ray's Lounge. Although the space is a small comedy club stage, Marino said they are able to adapt to it.

"All we need is a floor and an audience," he explained.

Marino said they are working with already established Brooklyn theater companies, including Park Slope's The Gallery Players and Bay Ridge's Narrows Community Theater, among many others, to produce the festival.

"After the plays were submitted, they were tailored to which group would be the best to direct and produce each one-act," Marino explained. "And it all comes back together under the umbrella of BrooklynONE. We want everyone to work together, because there is a distance between the companies. We want to show how artistic and creative and powerful this community really is."

This grassroots community theater movement wants to act as a stepping-stone for new talent sprouting up in the borough.

Marino said BIT's "goal is to centralize Brooklyn arts and to be able to take original productions of plays and musicals from Brooklyn to Manhattan."

For everyone working to pull the festival together, Marino said there is a driving passion when you are able to give back to your community while doing what you love.

"This is important because this is about community," said Bay Ridge state Sen. Marty Golden at the launch party. "Creativity in a community keeps it together and allows it to grow. The people in this room are on fire."

100 Wine Tips

Choosing Wine in a Restaurant

By Darrin Siegfried

How do you make the average worldly, confident business executive or professional squirm? Hand him a wine list! For years I worked as a Sommelier in some very good restaurants, and I always took pride in helping diners choose a wine that they would enjoy with their meal. Many of my customers were successful business owners and executives: people who made plenty of money because they were decision makers, and their decisions were usually right. So many of them quickly lost their confident mien as soon as they had a wine list in their hands. Really, there's not that much to get worked up about, and picking a wine isn't all that difficult. Let me give you a few tips.

Take your time. Don't rush, or you might end up picking a wine that you won't be happy with. Take a few seconds to flip through the list. Look at how it's laid out: are the Italian whites separate from the American whites? Are the wines grouped by price, or by grape variety? Is there a separate section for recommendations, or featured wines?

Relax. It's not like surgery: no one is going to die if you don't pick the "right" wine. It's all a matter of taste, and each one of us has our own favorites. Don't be afraid to pick what you want to.

Go with the restaurant's strengths. A French Bistro should have a wine list that features plenty of affordable French country wines, and a seafood restaurant should have more white wines than red. While you might find the occasional overlooked treasure on a wine list where it doesn't "fit," your best bet is to look for the wines that are appropriate for the restaurant where you are dining.

Avoid the Big Names. Having several vintages of well-known wines like Opus One, or a few hard-to-find "trophy wines" on your wine list is worth plenty of bragging points for any Sommelier. Now, since they aren't making any more of those older vintages and the rare ones are so hard to obtain, most restaurants try to discourage customers from actually buying those wines by marking them up to often ridiculous prices. It's common to see restaurants charge three, four or even five times the retail price for those wines. If you're on an expense account, then go ahead... but for the rest of us: watch out!

Beware of the Numbers Racket! Some restaurants print the numerical rating that the wine may have received from a critic, or from a magazine. Most of the time, the number listed is for a different (and more highly regarded) vintage than the one that they have available. Too often, the higher the number, the higher the markup.

on the wine. An overpriced 95 that isn't ready to drink and won't complement your meal is not as good as a bargain priced 85 that is drinking well and is a great match with the food you've ordered!

Look for wines that you know. Get a feel for how the restaurant prices its wines. Find a wine on the list that you know the price of, either from your wine shop or a restaurant that you know. Compare the price. Many restaurants charge twice what you'd pay in a wine store, but some restaurants are shameless.

Red or white? You can eliminate half of the list by making this decision. In a group, I often order a red and a white, so that there will be something for everyone, so this step doesn't always apply.

Order from the right side of the list. Look at the prices. You know how much you want to spend, so look at wines in that price range.

Plan ahead. If it's a special occasion, you might want to visit the restaurant a day or two before your reservation and look at the list. Without the pressure of having to order then and there, you can take your time and examine the list more closely.

Ask. Ask for the Sommelier. If they don't have one, find out who does the wine buying and speak with them. Tell them what you have in mind and ask them for a suggestion. Don't be afraid to tell them how much you want to spend. I often point discreetly to the price of a wine that is right in my price range and say, "Something like this, I think." When they bring a wine, ask them to show you where the wine is listed on the wine list... and check the price!

Let them get to know you. If it's a restaurant that you like and that you plan to return to, let the Sommelier know that you are interested in wine. Tell him that you're a wine lover and will be calling on him for his advice and expertise in the future. Ask him to keep you in mind when something new or something special comes in. I always held a few wines that were scarce just for people who I knew would appreciate them, and didn't put them on my list.

Tip: There's nothing that shows your Sommelier that you appreciate his help like a crisp bill, folded and palmed in a handshake, along with a "Thank you for your help." It doesn't have to be a lavish tip: a five or a ten goes plenty of attention in most restaurants. They'll remember, and be eager to help you the next time you come through the front door.



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Avuncular Cyclones skipper George Greer in one of his patented arm-around-chats.

IT USED TO BE CALLED "INSIDE BASEBALL" — the subtle strategy behind the plays — before baseball too often became a game of waiting for three-run homers.

One of the joys of the New York-Penn League, with its strong pitching and players adjusting to wooden bats, is that comparatively few home runs are hit — which heightens the importance of the seemingly small decisions that can alter the path of a ball game.

The beauty of old school inside baseball was apparent on Aug. 20 when Brooklyn traveled to Staten Island to reconnect with their cross-Narrows rivals.

The "inside baseball" started even before the game, as Cyclones manager George Greer mentioned how Staten Island's starting pitcher, lefty Edgar Soto, affected his strategy.

"You're concerned with the match-ups of lefty-righty," Greer said, explaining why he started right-handed batter Jeremy Hambrice at first instead of the lefty Tim Grogan.

The minor leagues is supposed to be all about "player development," but with the Cyclones trailing the Yankees by two games with three weeks left to play, Greer was going all-out to win.

Meanwhile, high up in the right-field stands, pitching coach Hector Berrios was meeting with his pitchers.

"We've lost four games in a row," said Berrios. "There's talk of the play-offs, and this game is televised. All those things might get the pitchers away from what has been working for them all season, so we talked about just staying with our regular approach — getting batters out early in the count."

The game started, and Brooklyn's Jesus Gamero became the contest's first baserunner with a single to start the second. Jason Jacobs singled to right, sending Gamero to third as Jacobs advanced to second on an error by the Yankee right-fielder.

The Yankees played their infield back, and a mere grounder by Ivan Naccarata, the next hitter, would score a run and possibly send Jacobs to third. Instead, Naccarata struck out.

The Cyclones did score a run when Hambrice grounded to short — but Greer wasn't satisfied.

"We could have had two runs there if Naccarata had just been able to hit a ground ball," said the manager.

Both starters were effective. Brooklyn's Eric Brown was keeping the ball down, inducing ground balls. The game moved to the seventh with Brooklyn still holding a 1-0 lead.

MITCH HILLIGOSS LED OFF FOR THE Yankees, hitting a towering fly to left. Dustin Martin misjudged the ball, turning twice and failing to catch the can of corn. Hilligoss wound up on second.

Greer explained Martin's mistake.

"He should play the ball to curve more into the gap," said Greer. "That's the way the ball will travel from a left-handed batter."

Sluggish Kyle Larsen was up next. With the wind blowing to right and a short right-field fence, the Cyclones had been pitching the left-handed-batting Larsen outside all game. If Larsen could pull the ball, he could send Hilligoss to third. The Cyclones pitched Larsen away, but he was still able to ground out to second to advance Hilligoss to third.

Next up was Colin Curtis. Brown obviously wanted to keep the ball down — a ground ball would keep the tying run at third — but the usually unflappable hurler got the ball a little up, and Curtis was able to hit a sac fly to score Hilligoss. The Yankees had tied the game by using two strategic outs to score a run.

The game remained 1-1 into the 10th.

Naccarata led off with a double and Grogan, who had entered the game batting for the right-handed Hambrice in the seventh, came up and was intentionally walked.

Jake Eigsti smacked to the plate in a bunting situation. But on the second pitch, Eigsti did not properly square around, missed the ball entirely, and Naccarata was picked off second.

Greer pointed out Naccarata's mistake.

"From early spring training on, we drill the players to see the ball hit the ground on a bunt before they start to the next base," said the manager.

Brooklyn failed to score again. The Yankees would not.

In the home 10th, Kevin Smith singled against reliever German Marte — and then moved to second on a perfectly executed bunt.

After an intentional walk, a wild pitch and another intentional walk, the Yankees had the bases loaded with one away and Hilligoss at bat. The winning run would almost certainly score on a productive out. The Cyclones, hoping for a double play, pitched Hilligoss low and inside, but he slapped the ball towards a diving shortstop Luis Rivera, who had no chance to make a play.

Why did the Yankees now have a three-game divisional lead? Because they had executed the finer points of the game and the Cyclones had not.

The Greer report

After compiling the best record in the New York-Penn League, the Cyclones had fully executed their early season demons, ensuring that manager George Greer's job was safe. But as that kid said in "Poltergeist," those demons are baaa-aacccc! The Clones have lost seven in a row, and a check of The Brooklyn Papers' exclusive "Greer-ometer" shows it leaning perilously close to safe.



BROOKLYN CYCLONES COVERAGE

Clones rumble, stumble vs. Yanks

After 2-1 loss Sunday, fight breaks out during 21-6 thrashing

By Vince DiMiceli
The Brooklyn Papers

If it looks like a rivalry, smells like a rivalry — and fights like a rivalry — friends, you have a rivalry.

And as baseball rivalries go, the Brooklyn Cyclones and Staten Island Yankees might stand just a rung below the New York Yankees and Boston Red Sox.

Well, at least things played out that way this past weekend.

Down two games in the standings, the Cyclones headed to Staten Island with a chance to grab a share of first place with a home-and-home set against the Baby Bombers.

Out on the Island, the Clones had a 1-0 lead going into the seventh when things suddenly came crashing down.

Mitch Hilligoss's fly ball to left was butchered by Dustin Martin, resulting in a two-base error. Hilligoss later scored on this sacrifice fly to Martin, knotting the score at one.

The Yanks loaded the bases in the bottom of the 10th, and up stepped Hilligoss with just one out. His single to left off Cyclones closer German Marte got the Yanks the win.

The next night, former Mets hurler and 1986 World Series champion Sid Fernandez threw out the first pitch and, in his honor, the Clones dommed limited-edition blue Hawaiian shirts instead of their standard home whites.

But the Yanks took an early lead, as Kyle Larsen launched a double to right, scoring Wilkins DeLaRosa, who had singled to start the game.

The Brooks answered back immediately, as leadoff man Joe Holden hit the second homer of the season over right field wall.

— a rare feat at Keyspan Park.

Moments later, with Jon Schimmel on second, Ivan Naccarata tripled to the wall in left center, giving Brooklyn its only lead of the night.

The Clones tacked on two more runs in the inning, as Jesus Gamero singled to left, scoring Naccarata. After Gamero stole second, Tim Grogan drove a pitch to right field to give the Clones a 4-1 lead.

The Yanks regained the lead in the second, scoring four times and knocking out Cyclones starter Jake Rucke. He was replaced by Jonathan Castillo,



Cyclones players empty onto the field after Staten Island Yankee Kevin Smith was hit by a pitch during Monday's 21-6 loss to the Yankees at Keyspan Park on Monday night.

who gave up a single to Hilligoss, scoring DeLaRosa.

Still, the Clones were able to even the score in the second, as Gamero singled in Holden.

But things began to disintegrate in third when Cyclones errors led to four more Yankee runs. Francisco Cervelli's slow roller was thrown away by Castillo, resulting in a run and a two-base miscue. Two batters later, the Yanks had a run in and runners on first and third when DeLaRosa launched a double to

left center. Two runs came in, but on a close play, DeLaRosa was called out at third.

That brought out the Yanks' fiery manager, Geylon Pitts, who pleaded his case to the umpire before being ejected from the game.

By the fifth inning, the game had already included 15 runs and 23 hits, and it stayed that way until the seventh, when the Yanks began to pour it on. After a Hilligoss double to the gap in left, the floodgates opened, as the three Yanks got plated in the seventh, and another seven came home in the eighth, which featured a bases-loaded, bases-clearing double to left by Larsen.

Things came to a boil in the ninth when, after Kevin Smith was hit by a pitch, words were exchanged and the benches cleared.

While no punches were thrown, Pitts — in his shower

shoes — rushed back onto the field to offer a few choice words for Cyclones management.

In the bottom of the ninth, Teddy Dziubla mercifully grounded out to Larry Porter, ending the 21-6 massacre. With the two losses, the Clones fell four games behind the front-running Yanks.

While Cyclones skipper George Greer downplayed the rivalry, claiming it didn't exist, his players don't necessarily feel the same way.

"There's always [bad blood] between these two teams," said Cyclones hurler Grady Hinchman after the game. "It will last the rest of the year. I can guarantee it. It will probably last the rest of the year, until we beat them in the championship."

The teams will face off just two more times this season, with a home-and-home set beginning on Monday on Staten Island.

At All-Star game, celebration trumps sloppy American win

By Ed Shakespeare
The Brooklyn Papers

The New York-Penn League All-Star Game on August 16 in Aberdeen, Maryland, wasn't much on the field, as the American League All-Stars beat their National League counterparts, 4-1, in a very sloppy game.

But who goes to an All-Star game to see great baseball?

All-Star games are really intended more as celebrations than as contests, so in that regard, the league's second annual contest, featuring six Cyclones, plus the team's coaching staff, was a definite success.

A great thrill was to see each player wearing the uniform of his corresponding big-league team. It was great to see the Cyclones — pitchers Eric Brown, Jake Rucke, and Jeremy Mizell; catcher Jason Jacobs, shortstop Luis Rivera, and outfielder Dustin Martin — looking like real Mets.

Manager George Greer, no stranger to all-star games, thanks to his career as a player and coach at the prestigious Cape Cod League, joked before the game, "One of my main tasks [as the National League manager] is to play all our future opponents enough so they wouldn't hold it against the Cyclones when we met again in the regular season."

For the Cyclones players, the thrills began before the game, thanks to a fine luncheon of Maryland crab cakes and a chance to talk with Cal Ripken.

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Jacobs said he felt inspired by "Iron Man" Ripken's speech.

"He talked to us about how he was able to maintain his

consecutive-games streak," said Jacobs.

"He said how consistency, conditioning, and the right frame of mind were necessary."

The Cyclones' faces were lit up before the game. They had been on amateur all-star teams all their lives, but professional all-star games are another matter.

On the field, each of the three Cyclones hurls threw a scoreless inning. As for the position players, Rivera was hitless in one at-bat and made a nice stop

in the field on the game's first batter, but a poor throw for an error on the play. Jacobs was 0-1 and Martin was 2-5 with a double.

Martin's parents had flown in from Texas for the game, so it was nice that he didn't disappoint.

On the field, things weren't so smooth. The game had five errors, two passed balls, but the Cyclones played reasonably well, had a good time, and — most important — no one got hurt.

Fusselle feeling fine after health scare breaks streak

By Ed Shakespeare
The Brooklyn Papers

On July 29, Cyclones announcer Warner Fusselle missed a game for the first time in an estimated 2,160 games — a Cal Ripken-esque string going back more than 30 years.

The only man to have seen every Cyclones game, Fusselle was in Keyspan Park's so-called "Cubbird Seat" for that night's game against the Staten Island Yankees.

But he could not speak — and after 45 minutes of silence,

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Hecat gets the old farm blues

WHAT DID SMARTMOM AND family do on their summer vacation? She and the kids swam in a brand new swimming pool and Hecat had to confront his past and accept change. That's a tall order for anyone, but especially for Hecat, whose a stickler for times gone by.

Every August, Smartmom spends a couple weeks at Hecat's family's farm in Northern California, a place about as far from Brownstone Brooklyn as you can get.

For Hecat, visiting the farm where he grew up was a land that his family has been tilling since 1928 — stirs up a mix of emotions.

Two years ago, his grandparents' house next door was sold along with the family swimming pool.

And in the past year, much of the farm land was sold to a farmer who chopped down 300 acres of walnut trees, that were planted the year Hecat was born.

That hit Hecat right in the ... well ... nuts. He could barely look at the orchard without a smirk.



SMART mom
By Louise Crawford
The Oh So Feisty One, poolside, in California.

Soon everyone was diving into the pool and cooling off in the 100-degree heat. Everyone except Hecat. He seemed to be having a hard time adjusting to the new pool, feeling that if he even acknowledged it, he was betraying the old pool.

"You guys swim," he said. "I'm going to walk the farm."

He wasn't being anti-social; he was just trying to make peace with the fact that much of the farm doesn't belong to his family anymore.

"I can't believe the new owners are going to turn the old pool into a basketball court," he told Smartmom after one of his walks near the old pool, its hull empty, the floor cracked and filled with putrid green water. "Who needs a basketball court?"

After everyone went to

APOLOGIZE...

Continued from page 1
come in. They'll respond. We've made a mess over there and we have to recognize that," he said.

Towns said that the U.S. should not pull out until the blue helmets are in place.

But Barron, in his own endorsement interview with The Brooklyn Papers, went further, saying U.S. troops should be called back from Iraq before the United Nations takes over.

"They should bring the troops home immediately," he said. "People say 'There'd be a civil war.' There already is a civil war! You don't stick with a mistake for ego reasons or political reasons."

Nearly 3,000 American soldiers — including Capt. John McKenna IV, 30, of Kensington, who died on Aug. 16 in Anbar province and anywhere from 40,000-100,000 Iraqis have died since the American invasion in March, 2003.



Rep. Ed Towns at The Brooklyn Papers' office in DUMBO.

BLOCK...

Continued from page 1
structure is waterproof and airtight, etc. — but have not yet begun work on the clock," explained MacArthur, referring to a recent Brooklyn

Papers story that reported that "Brooklyn's wristwatch" has not been working for months. The new shroud was viewed with horror by fans of the landmark building.

HIL...

Continued from page 1
view of the project," said De Blasio.

Other officials were more tight-lipped.

Connor spokesman Marty Algaize speculated that "Senator Clinton was caught off guard. She can't be an expert on everything, particularly on local issues. They obviously clarified their position in the letter she sent out."

Project opponents didn't see it as a "clarification," but as a desperate act of political expediency.

"Hill should be ashamed of herself for selling out... those of us who have worked for 20 years to build a real park with out a single backward glance," said Roy Sloane, a Cobble Hill community activist who was involved in an earlier version of the park plan.

"It's a good thing for Wang-gat Maath that Hillary isn't an elected official in Nairobi — or she'd be looking at luxury housing in her park, too!"

Hillary Clinton's staff had no comment.

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